

February is National Wise Health Care Consumer Month, and it's all about helping people make smart choices when it comes to their health care. What does it mean to be a wise health care consumer? In general, being a wise health care consumer means taking the time to learn about your insurance and medical care options, choosing the plan and treatments that are best for you, and reviewing medical bills to ensure the charges are correct. Below are ten ways that could help you become a better health care consumer.

1. **Take Your Time:** Choosing the right healthcare providers for you and your family is important. Ask for recommendations from trusted sources or read reviews from other people who have seen the doctor.
2. **Understand Your Coverage Plan:** Whether you get your medical insurance coverage through Medicare/Medicaid, your employer, or another source, it's vital for you to completely understand your benefits.
3. **Practice Preventative Health in Your Home:** The best medicine is prevention. Get health screenings when recommended.
4. **Keep Your Yearly Checkup Visits:** Annual wellness checks with your doctor can help identify any issues early, while treatment is easier.
5. **Ask About Generics:** If your prescriptions cost you a small fortune, you may be able to save money by switching to a generic brand. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if a cheaper version of your medication is available and safe for you.
6. **Prepare for Appointments:** Before an appointment, write a list of questions you have for your healthcare provider and take it with you. Also bring a list of any medications you take and your dosage.
7. **Take an Active Role in Appointments:** Your relationship with your healthcare provider should be just that – a relationship. If your doctor doesn't bring up something you want to discuss, feel free to bring it up. Feel free to ask questions at any time.
8. **Don't Hide Information:** It is not your doctor's job to judge or incriminate you; they are there to help. Be sure to be honest about your personal life because it can affect your care.
9. **Call for Your Results:** If you haven't heard from your doctor about results and you're getting concerned, go ahead and call. The staff should be happy to help. You can also get your results online for many tests on a patient portal.
10. **Don't Go Alone:** If you can, take a trusted loved one to appointments. He or she can help you remember all the information your doctor provides and ask relevant questions.

Following these tips can help you receive better care and help you make informed choices when it comes to your health.

*The above information was provided by: (Campbell County Health, 2020--10 Ways You Can Be A Wise Healthcare Consumer)*  
<https://www.cchwyo.org/news/2020/february/10-ways-you-can-be-a-wise-healthcare-consumer/#:~:text=If%20your%20doctor%20doesn't,it%20can%20affect%20your%20care>

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